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CONSUMERS LOOK AT EGGS 1/

Eggs in the Diet

Eggs are one of the "protective" foods. They are a source of important minerals and vitamins. And because of their high protein value and their usefulness in combining with other foods, they can alternate with meat, fish, and poultry as the main dish of the meal. They may be served at any meal and may be prepared in a great variety of ways. If possible every member of the family should have one egg a day. If for some reason this rule cannot be followed, five or six eggs a week, at least, should be included in the diets of children.

Egg Supplies

Eggs are usually more plentiful from January to June. During this period of abundance, homemakers can contribute much toward the solution of wartime shortages of storage space and limited transportation problems by increasing family consumption or home storage of eggs and at the same time can benefit from lower prices when the supply of all grades of eggs is at its peak. With modern methods of distribution and storage facilities, high quality eggs are available to consumers in our Nation at all seasons of the year.

Graded Eggs

With the growing consciousness of quality on the part of the consumer, egg grading has made rapid strides in recent years. Grading provides definite advantages for the consumer's guidance in buying. Packers are not required to grade eggs, but they may have eggs graded by a licensed Federal or State grader at the small cost of a fraction of a cent a dozen, which adds little or nothing to the price paid by consumers. Grade information at the retail level is indicated by dated certificates of quality or grade seals which are used to seal the carton and are a guarantee against substitution of quality. The U. S. certificate or label shows the quality on the date of grading. This applies to both "fresh" and "storage" eggs. There is no reason why eggs, of fine quality that have been stored under proper refrigeration for a short time, should not taste quite as delicious as fresh-laid eggs. Consumers who want the best quality for a specified sum of money, the greatest quantity for a specified sum of money, or a specified quantity and quality at a fair price will do well to buy graded eggs.

Consumer Protection under Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act

When eggs and egg products are shipped in interstate commerce they must meet the standards set up under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938. In general the law prohibits the sale of adulterated and misbranded foods. It requires that eggs and egg products be sound, wholesome, and edible and be labeled so as not to mislead the buyer. Eggs which have been subjected to incubation are regarded as inedible, as are decomposed, filthy, or otherwise contaminated eggs or egg products. They are subject to seizure and removal from channels of trade. Storage eggs may be so labeled when shipped in interstate commerce. Crates or cartons of eggs and cans and containers of egg

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products that enter interstate commerce, must be labeled to show the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor, and the quality of contents together with the common or usual name of the product.

Egg Grades and Their Use Values

US Grade AA -- very high in quality, suitable for diets of convalescents, usually purchased by highly discriminating consumers. Excellent for poaching and cooking in the shell. Yolk well-rounded; the white, clear and thick and stands up firmly around the yolk.

US Grade A --- available in most markets; High in quality, a good breakfast egg. Yolk well-rounded, free from defects, the white, clear and firm.

US Grade B --- usually available in markets. A good all-purpose egg for table use and cooking. Yolk may be somewhat flattened and a slight germ development may be apparent. The thick white is less firm.

US Grade C --- mostly for cooking purpose. The yolk may be slightly flattened and somewhat darker in color; the white, thin and watery.

When You Buy Eggs

Look for the grade and date on the carton.

Buy eggs by weight to secure full value.

Remember that brown and white eggs are equally tasty and nutritious; also that golden yolks may have no higher nutritional value than pale colored yolks. Patronize dealers who keep the eggs cool and clean.

Keep in mind that storage eggs are good for many purposes and are usually lower in prices.

Watch the ceiling prices.

Know about the consumer protection afforded you under Federal and State egg grading and labeling law.

Home Storage of Eggs

Keep eggs cool but avoid freezing or low temperatures which cause eggs to sweat when removed from the refrigerator.

Keep eggs away from highly flavored foods, as they absorb odors.

Don't wash eggs before storing.

Cover leftover egg yolk with cold water, and keep in a cold place.

Keep whites of eggs in a covered jar in the refrigerator until they are used.

Keep